

October 4, 1972

Honorable John Tunney  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tunney,

Thank you very much for the effort you ~~made~~ on behalf of my colleague Professor Cavalli-Sforza in connection with his concerns about his immigration status. The letter he has received from the ~~Commissioner~~ appears to clarify his situation in an evidently satisfactory fashion.

Let me also take the occasion to reply with my belated appreciation for your letter of November 29, 1971 on the occasion of an award of a grant from the National Science Foundation. Frankly, when I received that, I thought that was merely a form postcard and I was a little chagrined but even more delighted to learn later on that that was by no means the case.

I was also pleased to see your article in the Saturday Review about "Genetic Engineering" which is certainly among the most clear-minded statements that I have read in this easily distorted area of public concern. I do not give a very high priority of concern and anxiety about the likelihood of government interference in private behavior in this particular field - there are many more immediate abuses to be worried about - but this is not to say that these issues can be swept under the rug. You may be interested to read some statements I have written recently on a similar subject.

Perhaps the most important thing that I would like to communicate on this occasion is my very strong indorsement of the idea that Tom Gallagher was discussing with us about setting up groups of scholars in different fields to function as informal, and sometimes pluralistic, advisory councils for you. Being a Senator from California it certainly brings on many burdens and complexities, but the State has the advantage of having many intellectual resources and I am glad to see that you have a mind to tap them in a systematic fashion. The need for very careful staff work on many complicated questions is unfortunately brought out all too dramatically by the problems that Senator McGovern is facing in presenting a clear picture of his programs in the course of his campaign. I believe that very thorough discussion of basic issues in the context of these advisory councils might help to prevent such confusion in future electoral and legislative decisions. I would therefore urge on you, to the extent that you have the time, to participate in many informal seminars with various groups of scholars on issues of central national importance, for example just the same ones of social and welfare policy and national defense and so on that are uppermost during the present campaign. Besides the particular wisdom that might be generated by such discussions and catalyzed by your participation, I think that these group meetings would give you a very good opportunity to identify the particular points of view that are on the one hand backed by depths and expertise and on the other hand consistent with your own political philosophy. This will enable you to

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organize a cadre of intellectual support whose significance for wide policy-making for the entire country would be difficult to overestimate.

I hope all continues to go well with you, personally and politically, and I sign off now with deepest regards and admiration.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr